



Presented By:



PennState
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International Affairs



PUNC IX

RISE FROM THE ASHES

Baku on the Brink: 1918

HEAD OF COMMITTEE: Marta Millar



PENN STATE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND DEBATE ASSOCIATION

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Letter from the Crisis Director

Greetings Delegates,

I would like to take a moment to thank you personally for being with us this weekend for PUNC IX: Rise from the Ashes. As someone who has been involved with planning this conference since its earliest stages, I am extremely excited to have all of you here with us for an incredible weekend.



And now, for some formal introductions. My name is Marta Millar and I am a sophomore majoring in History, International Politics, and German, with minors in French and International Studies. Fun fact: I am leaving to study abroad at the Albert-Ludwigs Universität in Freiburg, Germany, the day after this conference concludes. I have been an active member of the Penn State International Affairs and Debate Association (PSIADA) since fall of my freshman year, and since joining, I have had the privilege of staffing several conferences, serving as the Director of Marketing for this conference, as as the Director of Logistics for our upcoming high school conference. I am also, of course, your Head of Committee and Crisis Director for Baku on the Brink: 1918.

I first envisioned this committee this summer when I was reading a peculiar and interesting work called *The Orientalist: Solving the Mystery of a Strange and Dangerous Life* by Tom Reiss. The biography follows the life of Lev Nussimbaum, born in the city of Baku to a Communist mother and an oil millionaire father who, despite being a Jew, crafted a place for himself as one of the most prominent writers in Nazi Germany by fabricating a fantastic background for himself as the descendant of a long line of Muslim princes and seasoning this narrative with exaggerated episodes from his youth. While there were a number of extraordinary facets of this tale, the description of the opulence and vibrancy of Baku -- and the subsequent conflict in which it was embroiled -- captured my attention as I envisioned a number of crises which could arise from this cauldron of cultures. My hope is that, by participating in this committee, you too will find fascinating the saga of this extraordinary, often overlooked segment of history, and the decisive role you will assume within it. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or concerns, and I look forward to meeting all of you PUNC weekend!

Sincerely,

Marta Millar
Crisis Director, Baku on the Brink: 1918
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Penn State International
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Letter from the Chair

Dear Delegates,

Let me take this opportunity to express how excited I am to welcome you to both Pennsylvania United Nations Conference 2016 and Penn State. We love having visitors here in Happy Valley and I am very much looking forward to meeting all of you.

My name is McQuillin Murphy and I will be your chair for Baku on the Brink: 1918 during PUNC weekend. I am a junior studying international politics and geography, with minors in Chinese and geographic information science. This is my third year in Penn State International Affairs and Debate Association, in which I serve as the Vice President for Communications. I have staffed PUNC 2014 and PHUNC 2014 as a crisis staffer, PUNC 2015 as cartographer-in-residence, and am excited to share my first chairing experience with you.



I hope that this weekend will include lucrative oil deals, whispers of rebellion, and the awakening of the proletariat. We in PSIADA look forward to whatever you bring to the debate in the streets of Baku.

Welcome to PUNC 2016,
McQuillin Murphy
Chair, Baku on the Brink: 1918

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Background

Overview:

As 1918 dawns the world is in chaos. In the midst of revolution, Russia has withdrawn from Great War and entered peace negotiations with the Central Powers. As the Bolsheviks squabble for control at home, parties in the outer-reaches of the crumbling empire grapple for their own independence, even while the Russians struggle to secure Soviet control. The oil-rich metropolis of Baku, perched on a peninsula on the Caspian Sea, shines as a gleaming prize that Lenin and his men vie to control, even as the newly-formed Transcaucasian Sejm works towards regional independence. Bolsheviks flood the city to stir up support, but the fabulously wealthy oil barons are far from enthralled with the notion of a communist revolution. Although the working class Muslim Azerbaijani population should make the ideal audience for proletariat propaganda, nationalist sentiments resenting tsarist rule still run deep; the Bolshevik decision to then ally with the upperclass Armenian population further strains tensions between ethnic populations already on edge with the memory of bloody street fighting from only thirteen years ago...

Background on Baku:

The city of Baku is a bustling metropolis at this time, on par with the largest counterparts in the world. Its population is growing at the same rate as those of London and New York. Following the invention of more sophisticated technology, the city experienced an oil boom in the late nineteenth century, attracting worldwide attention and spurring the growth of its culture. The Rockefellers and the Nobels both own oil fields, among other foreign investors, although a considerable number of Azerbaijani millionaires have made their fortune here. The oil barons reside in the wealthiest quarter of Baku and many have made significant contributions to the city, although, with their private armies and complex system of warring, bribes, and bartering, their number one interest still remains themselves.

Although many of the millionaires are native Azerbaijanis, the bulk of Azerbaijanis in the city are poor, working class Muslims, many of whom slave away at the oil fields. Most of the middle class jobs in the city are instead held by the Christian Armenians, and ethnic tensions between the two classes are strained. In 1905, Baku became one of the cities with the Caucasus to experience bloody clashes between the two groups, which left several hundred dead. The scars from this incident, barely a decade earlier, are still fresh.

On a broader scale, Baku and the larger Caucasus region face questions about its political identity and relations. While previously under the control of the Russian Empire, the chaotic fall of the tsar has allowed formerly hidden nationalistic movements the room to maneuver and call for the creation of an independent state. The Bolsheviks, however, are reluctant to allow such an oil rich city leave their control, even if the majority of the population is still bitter about Russian control. However, with the rest of the major powers still engaged in a



world war, several other forces, such as the British, the Ottomans, and the Germans, are also interested in courting or capturing the city.

Brief Timeline of Relevant Events Preceding This Committee:

End of 1917 - Bolsheviks lose control of Grozny oilfields, making Baku their single source of oil

November 11, 1917 - Transcaucasian Sejm created in Tiflis, Georgia, with the aim to separate from Bolshevik Russia

November 13, 1917 - Bolsheviks and Left Socialist-Revolutionaries proclaim Baku Soviet, which assumes control of the Baku Governorate. It is not recognized by major parties in the Sejm (Musavats and ARF).

December 5, 1917 - The Armistice of Erzincan ends fighting between the Ottomans and Russia in WWI.

January 1918 - Shamkhor Massacre - The Sejm's Military Council of Nationalities Menshevik leader Noe Ramishvli orders Russian troops leaving the front from WWI to disarm. When they refuse to do so, the Azeris attack them. The Baku Soviet plays this against the Sejm.

January 27, 1918 - The British "Dunsterforce" (led by General Lionel Dunsterville) leaves Baghdad for the Caucasus in order to secure the front against the Turks.

February 1918 - British dispatch troops to Baku to protect oil interests from German.

February 10-24, 1918 - The Sejm adopts declaration of independence declaring Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic

February 17, 1918 - British "Dunsterforce" arrive in Enzeli enroute to Baku but are denied passage by the Bolsheviks.

March 3, 1918 - Treaty of Brest-Litovsk signed. One subsection requires the Bolsheviks to demobilize and dissolve ethnic Armenian bands in previously controlled territories.

Early March - Armenians are massing in Baku, supported by the British and the Allies, to resist the Ottomans, which causes unrest and distrust with the Azeris.

March 9, 1918 - The Soviets arrest commander of the disbanded Savage Division upon arrival in Baku, which sparks Azerbaijani protests and calls to resistance.



March 14, 1918 - At Trebizond Peace Conference, the Transcaucasian Sejm begins negotiations with the Ottomans, who do are also interested in seeing the region independent from Russian influence, but do not view the Transcaucasian Sejm as a legitimate governing body of a state. Because of these issues, tensions rise between the two entities.

End of March 1918 - This Committee Meets

Topics of Debate

Bearing the aforementioned areas of contention in mind, delegates this weekend are challenged to solve several issues. Despite different ethnic ties, the committee should work to establish some sort of balance and peace between the different opposing factions, lest hundreds of innocents perish in unnecessary violence and unrest. Key to determining how the peace between political and ethnic factions will proceed, however, will be creating a decisive political course of action for Baku. Will it continue to follow Russia and solidify its ties with the Baku Soviet as the revolution persists, or will nationalistic dreams of creating a separate state succeed? Furthermore, what will Baku's role be in relation to other foreign powers? Both the British and the Germans -- who are currently at war -- have stakes in the region, and are prepared to fight for these ties. Some Azerbaijanis, along with the Transcaucasian Sejm, believe that inviting the Ottoman empire in will allow them to secure the independent, nationalist identity they desire, while other statesmen see cooperating with the Soviets as the key to the future.

Committee Structure

Historically, there were two governing bodies in the region at this time: the Transcaucasian Sejm and the Baku Soviet. The Transcaucasian Sejm met in Georgia and consisted of delegates from the various national parties of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan working to establish a state independent of Russian interests. The Baku Soviet formed as a reaction to this committee, and represented mainly the interests of the Bolsheviks. Neither body, however, truly had full control over the situation in Baku or Azerbaijan at the time. While historically the committee I have gathered here today did not exist, many of its players participated in the aforementioned bodies and later eventually formed parts of newer governments which came into existence. I chose, however, to begin this committee with a council of these leaders as a fictional forum where the most prominent members of the city of Baku are working together to negotiate its fate in the face of adversity such as advancing foreign powers. By perching us upon this precipice, I hope to allow for more complexity and flexibility in dealing with the upcoming crises, instead of plunging us into an unchangeable track of history. These positions represent some of the most influential of various functions in Baku, congregating together to determine the fate of the city.



Crisis

Crisis will act as all domestic, non-state, and state actors not represented by committee positions. For example, some important entities represented by the crisis team are: the Bolshevik government in Moscow, the Ottoman Empire, British forces, German forces, and the Transcaucasian Sejm. Your primary method of communication with crisis will be with notes; however, you may request to meet with an attaché outside of the room or request they enter the room. In this case, a crisis staffer will represent the requested person. While the latter will typically be accomplished through a directive, all of the options are methods of interacting with crisis and vital to effective participation in the committee.

Portfolio Powers

Within this committee, each delegate will serve as an important and official member of Baku society. Depending on your position and personal history, you will have different resources available to you. For example, an oil tycoon may have large quantities of wealth and personal bodyguards at their disposal, while a Bolshevik Party member would have connections with Moscow, other party members, or the press. However, these positions are all subject to the support of the people with whom they are collaborating, any superiors they might have, and the politics in the room.

Communicating with Crisis

Please be certain to include your position in a prominent position both on the front of the note and signed in the note, so the crisis team can quickly and clearly recognize with whom they are corresponding. Additionally, please ensure that all notes are clear and concise, yet specific. Please designate specific quantities when moving assets such as money or troops, and the more specific you can be about how these resources will be allocated, the better. Open-ended or vague communications could allow crisis to interpret the instructions in a manner not intended by the delegate, which may ultimately prove detrimental to you. Finally, please do your best to make your writing legible. Crisis will reply to all notes via sticky notes, so do not be concerned about leaving space for a reply.

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Committee Positions

A NOTE ABOUT RESEARCH:

I am aware of the fact that for some of these individuals, there are limited resources available for researching more specific background information about your position. Please bear in mind that for the purposes of this committee, it is more important to understand allegiances and political motivations that a figure would have had, versus specific information about their personal history. Therefore, if you are having issues, prioritize understanding ethnic and political history and ideologies over detailed biographical information. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions or run into problems and I will be happy to assist.

Tatevos Amirov (alternative spellings - Emirov / Emiryan) is a leader of the Dashnak party extremely dedicated to Armenian nationalist causes. He has connections with the Bolshevik party, as well as experience as an officer serving and commanding cavalry units.

Bala bey Ashurbeyov is a member of one of the most prominent Azerbaijani noble families of Baku. Famous not only for their fabulous wealth but also their multiple philanthropic projects throughout the city, the Ashurbeyov family endeared themselves to the general public by constructing two of the four mosques in the city, in addition to numerous other projects.

Meshadi Azizbekov, an Azeri, grew up in Baku and then attended university in St. Petersburg, where he joined the Russian Social Democratic Party. In addition to being active politically in St. Petersburg and Azerbaijan, between 1908 and 1910 he worked with revolutionary forces in Iran. Azizbekov worked to improve numerous aspects of life in Baku. He held considerable influence over cultural scene in Azerbaijani society, playing an active role with the National Theatre, and running several publications. He was head of the cultural educative society of Nijat. He actively worked for education for the poor. Azizbekov was also an engineer and financial supporter of the construction of Shollar water in Baku -- an important pipeline which brought fresh water to the city. In addition to being a respected member of the Bolshevik Party, Azizbekov was also a part of the Hümme't party -- the Muslim Social Democratic Party. Azizbekov actively sought to reconcile conflicts between the Armenian and Azerbaijani populations of Baku.

Eizhen Berg fought extensively in the Russian Navy during the First World War. He joined the Communist Party and was a member of the Naval Revolutionary Committee, working to promote insurgency within Moscow, as per Lenin's orders. He was then transferred to Baku in 1918 and served as the chief of communications for the Caucasian Red Army.



Prokofy Dzhaparidze is a Georgian who joined the Bolshevik Party when he attended university in 1900. He moved to Baku in 1904 and founded the Gummet organization, which specialized in political work among the Muslim population of the city, drawing many supporters to the party. He also helped run several publications in the city, and organized strikes. Dzhaparidze was exiled from Baku in 1909 and again in 1915. In 1917, following the February Revolution, Dzhaparidze was named the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Baku Soviet, as well as a member of the Committee of Revolutionary Defence.

Ivan Fioletov was born to a poor peasant family in Russia. He moved to Baku to work as a metalworker, and joined the Bolshevik Party soon after. Fioletov became a union activist in the oil industry, helping to instigate union activity during the 1905 Russian Revolution. Although he was exiled as a result, Fioletov returned to Baku in 1911 and continued to promote the Bolshevik party and its ideals. He was selected as a member of the executive committee of the Baku soviet in February 1917, and in May he became the chairman of the Trade Union of the Petroleum Workers.

Agha Bala Guliyev is wealthy Azerbaijani businessman known as the “Flour King” for his ownership of many mills and vast control over the flour trade within Baku. While flour, not oil, made him rich, he still invested in Baku’s most lucrative resource. In 1897 he founded the Baku-Batum joint stock-company, which had constructed an oil pipeline between the two cities by 1907. He is known to be sympathetic to nationalistic Azerbaijani causes.

Mammad Hasan Hajinski is an Azerbaijani statesman and architect who grew up in Baku. In his position as director of the construction department of Baku municipality, he was responsible for numerous construction and improvement projects throughout the city. He secretly joined the Musavat -- Muslim Democratic -- party in 1911, and began openly supporting the party after the February Revolution in 1917. He helped establish and run *Hummet* -- the party’s newspaper -- and he attended numerous conferences and summits between Muslims within the former Russian empire. Hajinski is currently the deputy Commissar of Industry and Trade of the Transcaucasian Federation’s governing body, the Sejm (the first government of the independent regions of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia (which the Bolsheviks did not recognize)).

Mammad Hanifa is the Muslim Azerbaijani son of an oil baron and the owner of the Volcano Steamship Company, which ships oil from Baku to other Caspian Sea ports. He is one of the most influential leaders in the Inner City of Baku, and feels passionate about resisting Bolshevik control, and about the protection of the Azerbaijani citizens.

Fatali Khan Khoyski is an Azerbaijani Muslim intellectual and attorney who was born into a prominent noble family that was once favored by the czar. He served in the Second Duma of the Russian empire, and criticized imperial practices in Azerbaijan. In Russia he was part of



the Temporary Executive Committee of Muslim National Councils. In 1917, he spoke at a meeting of the Musavat party about the need to create an autonomous Azerbaijan. He was appointed the Minister of Justice for the new Transcaucasian Federation.

Grigory Korganov was born into the Armenian family of a military officer. Although he started at Moscow University, he was expelled for spreading revolutionary propaganda. He continued his family's military tradition, serving as an officer on the Caucasian Front in World War One, where he also continued to spread Bolshevik propaganda. After the October Revolution in 1917, Korganov became Chairman of the Revolutionary Army in the Caucasus, and in March 1918 he was named a member of the Committee of Revolutionary Defense of Baku.

Styopa Lalayev (alternative spelling - Stepan Lalaya) is an Armenian leader of the Dashnak party in Baku. He is extremely dedicated to the Armenian nationalist cause and desire to create their own state by forcing out the Azerbaijani population by any means possible. He created and spread propaganda to organize the Armenian population within Baku and to attract them to this cause.

Anastas Mikoyan was born in 1895 in a small Armenian village then under the control of the Russian Empire. While he was educated at a seminary, he soon abandoned his theological studies to pursue politics, joining the Bolshevik party in 1915. He worked to spread Bolshevism throughout the Caucasus, joining the Red Army as a commissar and saving the life of another prominent party member in 1917. In Baku he serves as the co-editor for the Armenian language newspaper *Sotsyal-Demokrat* as well as the Russian paper *Izvestia Bakinskogo Soveta*. He also helped found the Baku Soviet.

Musa Naghiyev is one of the richest oil barons in Baku. He has also invested extensively in real estate, and numerous buildings around the city were constructed and owned by him. Naghiyev donated copious amounts of money to fund education, scholarships, and schools. Despite his extreme generosity, he does have a (perhaps unfounded) reputation for being stingy and greedy, which makes him less popular than some of his colleagues.

Mammad Amin Rasulzade was born near and educated in Baku to an Azerbaijani family. In the early 1900s, he had allied with the Bolshevik party, even as he established his own political organization of socialist Muslims called Hümmeet. He wrote for many papers for the movement, before being forced to leave by the czarist government. During his time away from Baku, he contributed to the Iranian Constitutional Revolution and the Young Turks movement in the Ottoman Empire. In 1913, when he returned to Baku, he joined the Musavat Party. He established the party's newspaper, and he was elected to the Sejm, the governing body of the Transcaucasian Federation, when it seceded from Russia in 1917. He is currently



the leader of the Muslim faction within the Sejm, and thus has an influential role over the Azerbaijani Muslims in Baku.

Stepan Shahumyan was born in Tiflis, Georgia (then under the control of the Russian Empire) in 1878 to Armenian parents. He studied in St. Petersburg, joining the Russian Social Democratic Party in 1900, and was later exiled back to the Caucasus for taking part in political activity against the czarist government. In Baku, he was jailed by the Imperial Army for promoting the Bolshevik Party and leading strikes in 1914, although he escaped from prison in 1917. The Bolshevik Party plans to appoint Shahumyan head of the more substantial government they hope to create in Baku. Although a prominent party member, Shahumyan differs ideologically from many of his colleagues in his efforts to find peaceful solutions to conflicts, rather than imposing terror or force to achieve his goals. In addition to his political position, Shahumyan founded and edits several newspapers within the city.

Hamazasp Srvantstyan is an Armenian member of the Dashnak party with close connections to the Bolshevik leader Shahumyan. He had participated in the bloody uprisings in Baku in 1905, before being exiled to Siberia by the czarist government. He escaped to command an Armenian regiment in the First World War before coming to Baku, where he continues to serve as a troop commander.

Mir Hasan Vazirov is an Azerbaijani politician who has been involved with the Bolshevik party since his early youth. His family descended from the Persian Karabakh khanate, which the Russian Empire had vanquished a century earlier. Vazirov is one of the few prominent Azerbaijani Muslim leaders to gain the respect of the greater foreign powers at work in the city, so he has a considerable role as a voice of the average Azerbaijani citizen in Baku.

Haji Zeynaladin was born into a poor Azerbaijani family Baku, but grew up to be one of the richest men in the Russian empire when an oil well was found on land he had purchased. Although his wealth originated in oil, he later added fisheries, transportation, and textiles to his business interests. He paid for numerous improvements to the city of Baku, including the Shollar pipeline which provided it with clean water, and poured immense funding into cultural and educational interests. His numerous contributions to the city and the Azerbaijani national identity have earned him a place of immense respect in Azerbaijani society.

Stepan Zorian was a member of the Dashnak party and a founder of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) which promoted the Armenian national liberation movement throughout the Caucus. The movement sought to promote the rights of Armenians, distinct from Azerbaijani Muslims, and called for the creation of an independent Armenian state. Zorian plays a key role in directing this movement from Baku.



References and Further Research:

- *Blood and Oil in the Orient* by Kurban Said
 - *The Orientalist: Solving the Mystery of a Strange and Dangerous Life* by Tom Reiss
- Nationalism and social class in the Russian revolution: the cases of Baku and Tiflis* - Ronald Grigor Suny

